



NORTH DAKOTA
DEPARTMENT *of* HEALTH

NEWS RELEASE

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North Dakota Department of Health Stresses the Importance of Flu Shots

BISMARCK, N.D. – The North Dakota Department of Health is reminding North Dakotans – especially those at high risk for complications from influenza – of the importance of receiving a flu shot, according to Heather Weaver, Immunization Program manager.

“Influenza is not like a cold or a 24-hour bug,” Weaver said. “It is potentially serious and can be life-threatening to the elderly and people at high risk for medical complications. Getting a flu shot is the easiest and most effective way to protect yourself and your loved ones.”

The amount of available vaccine varies across the state. In some areas, only high-risk people are receiving shots; in others, shots are available for anyone. For that reason, people should contact their health-care provider or local public health unit to check on availability in their area.

“There is not a shortage of vaccine this year, just a delay in some areas,” Weaver said. “Some people who want to be vaccinated may need to be patient and persistent. Everyone who needs and wants a flu shot should be able to get one this year.”

The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommends that everyone be vaccinated against the flu, especially the following people at high-risk for complications:

- All children ages 6 through 23 months
- All adults age 50 and older
- Residents of long-term care facilities
- People of any age who have long-term health problems, such as:
 - Heart disease
 - Lung disease
 - Kidney disease
 - Diabetes

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- Asthma
- Anemia
- Weakened immune systems due to HIV/AIDS and cancer treatments
- Breathing problems due to neuromuscular disorders
- Pregnant women

People who can possibly spread the disease to those at high risk – such as health-care workers, out-of-home caregivers and household contacts – also should be vaccinated.

Typical flu symptoms include fever, dry cough, sore throat, runny or stuffy nose, headache, muscle aches and extreme fatigue. Two cases of influenza have been reported so far this year in the state.

In North Dakota, the influenza season usually does not peak until February, so there is still a sufficient amount of time for people to be vaccinated. “It’s never too late to get a flu shot,” Weaver said.

For information about vaccine availability, people should contact their health-care provider or local public health unit. For information about influenza, visit www.ndflu.com.

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